

Kelly Brewer Council Comments - Warming Center

I wanted to start by thanking the tireless volunteers that run the Warming Center.

At our last meeting our mayor chose to ridicule and chastise the majority of our councilors, accusing them of "carrying favors to the cause of the week" and ignoring our city's financial crisis.

There were references to these same councilors "happily spending other people's money" and "turning a blind eye to critical projects" such as the Greenwater's bridge.

I find these types of comments not only unprofessional but unnecessary. This communication breakdown between this Council and what constitutes an acceptable fee waiver has become a catalyst for counterproductive conversation which is felt throughout this community.

For instance, here we have "The Warming Center" asking for a fee waiver to use Greenwater's Community building.

Our mayor may not want it referred to as "A fee waiver" but in fact when any group of volunteers requests to use this building it is, and always has been, considered as such.

They're asking to give shelter to unhoused, non-tax paying citizens, during times where the weather falls below freezing temperatures. This is for an undisclosed number of days due to our unpredictable winters, with an unknown fiscal impact.

Last year, the total number of days waived was 50. This number of days constitutes a loss of \$4,000 of revenue with an additional \$2,000 in necessary additional insurance, which comes out of the general funds.

As referenced in our mayors' comments during last session He stated that "This council is refusing to take action to increase revenue or significantly decrease expenditure" This topic ironically addresses both issues.

This program, as necessary as it is on a humanitarian level, comes at a great expense to the city by way of insurance, electricity for lights and costly heaters running all night, as well as water, sewer, and garbage services.

In my opinion, if we can't mutually agree to waive the fees for our children's community events and activities, all of which were a total of 7 collective days of rental fees, using the building for no more than 3-4 hours at a time, I don't see how we can waive fees for non-residents regardless of the circumstances.

The fact that most of these kids belong to tax paying residents alone stands to consider the merit behind those votes. I believe wholeheartedly in these causes, including the warming center and that so many of their activities and needs would go without, unless these fee waivers or at least reduced fees are given. The fact is that the Warming Center request is by far the largest waiver we give, I believe this council needs to put more weight behind its decision.

With that said, I'm asking that the council consider this topic BE TABLED until an agreement can be made within council, on how to address these items with mutual respect, empathy and with the idea that we are here for this community.